# NIGHT OF THE VIOLENT MEN

A script by Jack Felson

Jack Felson

email: jack\_felson@hotmail.com

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FADE IN:

## INT. BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A couple is making hard love. The boy is on the girl, who's lying on her back. He pumps her hard, for a minute that looks and sounds like an hour.

Then they separate, exhausted, sweating.

The boy is LONNIE, 22, the girl is SANDRA, she's older to him (25).

As they recover we can hear a sound. There's a TV set on, facing their bed.

After a few more seconds gasping:

SANDRA

Gimme a cigarette.

He takes a pack off his bedside table and gives it to her, almost unaware.

She searches it then she throws it back to him.

SANDRA (cont'd)

I said a cigarette.

LONNIE searches the pack in his turn. It's empty.

LONNIE

Shit.

(throwing it on the floor) Don't you have another one?

SANDRA

It's empty too.

The phone rings. LONNIE takes it.

LONNIE

Yeah?

VOICE

Party time, man!

LONNIE

You bet.

VOICE

What d'you mean by that?

LONNIE

You always call me when I get laid.

VOICE

You always get laid when I call you.

LONNIE

Nobody pays you to do that. You're not even supposed to call me at all.

VOICE

Get your rookie ass over here, okay? We got some work to do.

LONNIE

Thanks for the info. When you decide to strike you'll inform me first, how's that?

VOICE

We got a fuckin' robbery, man!

LONNIE

So? In this city there's a fuckin' robbery every three fuckin' seconds. I'll be there in an hour, that's my schedule.

He hangs up.

SANDRA

Same creep?

LONNIE

Yeah. Always on my back.

SANDRA

It won't last. Especially if you kick his ass. What d'you want for dinner?

LONNIE

Ain't you supposed to work tonight?

SANDRA

I'm not. Today is a day off. Didn't
you know? It's holiday.

LONNIE

Yeah, I forgot.

SANDRA

Nobody works today.

LONNIE

Almost nobody.

She looks at him.

SANDRA

So that's what the call was about? To remind you it's not a day off for you guys?

LONNIE

I already know it's not a day off for me. We guys work every day you know, holidays included. But I'm just starting, so there are still jerks thinking I don't even know that.

They listen to a news-speaker on TV, talking about the celebrations that are still on in the city and the whole country.

SANDRA

So what d'you want for dinner?

LONNIE

Something Italian.

They laugh out.

LONNIE (cont'd)

D'you know what those celebrations are about?

SANDRA

(shaking her head)

I'm not American.

LONNIE

So you don't know?

SANDRA

Not exactly.

LONNIE

(shrugging)

Well, we're only celebrating the birth of our country, you know. Independence Day.

SANDRA

Oh . . .

LONNIE

Didn't you really know?

SANDRA

As I said, I'm not American. I've been educated in Rome.

LONNIE

Okay. Well, that's what it's all about.

SANDRA

Looks to be some hell of a celebration.

LONNIE

We're entitled to this every year, same day. We're almost forced to celebrate the validation of a country that has built itself on the blood of others.

They watch TV for a short while, then Sandra turns her eyes to his face and starts kissing him.

SANDRA

You know what? I'm sure your founding ancestors started by doing something like this...

LONNIE

Yeah... why not? But... I'll feel better and do better after a cigarette.

SANDRA

Smoke me.

They 're'make love. This time she's on him.

As they do the CAMERA moves up to the window and gets out, catching the whole city of Los Angeles in the frame.

The TITLES roll.

#### INT. JEWELRY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

A French, first-class jewelry store. There are a few customers inside, most of them women. No customer in front of the cash desk.

After a little time two men step in, peacefully, like clients do. Each one of them holds a suitcase.

Suddenly they put on black hoods and pull out guns.

HOOD #1

Everybody freeze! This is a fuckin' robbery!

HOOD #2

Down on the floor! Now!

Some female customers start screaming, the others freeze with high surprise. Most of them don't get down on the floor.

HOOD #2 (cont'd)

Shut the fuck up! I told you to get down on the floor, not to yell like pigs!

HOOD #1

Get the fuck down! All of you!

They do it.

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

And put your hands behind your heads! Now! Hands behind your heads!

He makes sure they all do what he says, then he goes to the cashier, an old fat woman, dressed like the Queen of England. She is so astonished, so scared that she didn't think of pushing the button connected to the police.

The two HOODS have had an eye on her since they got in.

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

Open that goddamn box! And all that glass stuff! I don't want any traces, understand?

She moans, saying nothing.

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

Are you deaf? Do as I say!

She opens the cash till, which is filled like crazy.

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

Get back! And keep your hands in sight!

He takes all the bills, leaves the coins in.

HOOD #2

(sarcastic)

Take your time man!

HOOD #1

(to the old woman)

The windows, open 'em now! All of them!

WOMAN

(stuttering)

I... I can't.

HOOD #1

Open 'em!

WOMAN

I can't!

HOOD #1

Don't bullshit me! Don't tell me there's no system to open these things!

WOMAN

There are keys. No system of any kind.

HOOD #1

Shit. Get out from behind that desk.

(After she gets out from behind the desk:)

Now get your fat ass down on the floor. Down on the floor.

She gets down on the floor.

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

Put your hands behind your head.

She puts her hands behind her head. Then:

HOOD #1 (cont'd)

(To HOOD #2)

C'me on, man, let's have some fun.

We have three minutes.

HOOD 2 gets it and starts breaking all the glass windows and boxes with jewels inside, and HOOD 1 imitates him almost at once, putting the jewels in the suitcases. After a couple of minutes they run out of the store.

#### EXT. JEWELRY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

They rush to their car but another car, a police car... passes by. There are two men inside, they hear screams from inside the store, and these two people coming out of it, towards a car parked in front... their reaction is immediate. They blow their siren and stop very close to the robbers' car so it can't go.

HOOD #1

Oh, shit...

The two robbers can't use their car no more, so they start running along the sidewalk like they are possessed by demons.

## EXT. SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

The two patrol men get out of their car, pointing their guns.

PATROL MAN #1

Stop!

PATROL MAN #2

Right there!

PATROL MAN #1

FREEZE !!

The two guys don't freeze, so the cops start running after them. There are people on the sidewalk so they can't shoot. One of them have the idea to fire in the air and some pedestrians dive on the ground, screaming like they are possessed by demons. The other cop shoots at the robbers with no precise aim, once, but not twice. The robbers turn to their pursuers as they run and one of them, the one in front, turns inside an alley. The other follows.

## EXT. ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

The two hooded robbers keep running. They are about forty yards ahead from the police officers.

PATROL MAN #1 (cont'd)

Freeze, goddammit!

PATROL MAN #2

You stop right now or we fuckin' shoot you, you hear?

HOOD #2

Fuck you!

HOOD #1

You don't have the guts!

PATROL MAN #1

I said freeze!

The police men open fire, in order more to try to make them stop, than to kill them. But the two robbers keep running. The bullets whistle and ricochet around them, but this doesn't make them stop. Not this, or even the voices of the cops ordering them to stop.

Until a bullet hits one of the suitcases. It opens and everything inside it falls down on the ground.

Both HOODS stop.

HOOD #1

Shit! I'm covering you!

He starts to fire back at the cops who jump to both sides of the alley. HOOD 1 keeps firing to keep them out of sight.

ALLEY - ON COPS

PATROL MAN #1

(in his radio)

We need back-up in a lane, we're after two guys who just robbed a jewelry store...

ALLEY - ON HOODS

HOOD #2 uses his feet to get the jewels quickly toward one of the walls, just behind a big garbage bin. Then he dives behind it. HOOD #1 stops firing and jumps to the other wall.

HOOD #2

Go. Go away!

He's already started putting the jewels back in the suitcase.

HOOD #1

What?

HOOD #2

Soon this lane will be swarming with cops. You better go before we both get stuck!

HOOD #1 hesitates.

HOOD #2 (cont'd)

Go, man! Just go! Now!

HOOD #1 turns his head and fires again. One of the two cops gets his head safe.

HOOD #2 is ready now. His gun in his hand.

HOOD #2 (cont'd)

I'll cover you. Go, dammit!

HOOD #1

What about you, man?

HOOD #2

Shut up and get the hell out of here!

 ${\tt HOOD}$  #1 stands back up and  ${\tt HOOD}$  #2 starts firing again at the cops, while his partner runs to the end of the alley. Soon he disappears and  ${\tt HOOD}$  #2 stops firing.

He keeps putting the jewels back in the suitcase.

ALLEY - ON COPS

Police sirens can be heard from a distance. They get closer and closer.

The two cops approach silently, trying not to be seen from the two others. A couple of gunshots make them dive aside again.

ALLEY - ON HOODS

HOOD #2 just shot a door open. He gets in, the suitcase between his left hip and arm in order to keep it closed, his gun in his right hand.

## INT. BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

He's in a decayed, abandoned big building, with nothing inside but dirt. It's completely dark... almost. The windows are covered from the outside with wood but some light manages to get through so we still can see a little.

The first floor of the building is divided into three or four rooms, all nasty and empty. It looks to have been the main place of companies before. Now it's like dorm rooms for bums. The total opposite to a jewelry store.

HOOD #2 looks quickly around all the rooms, then he finds a flight of stairs. He uses them to get to the second floor.

The police sirens sound like from inside the building.

INT. BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR

Same thing, the same empty and nasty rooms.

He gets inside one of them, to the window. He can't open it, so he breaks the glass completely. Then he tries to take the wood away. The wood is quite thick and very solidly nailed to the wall outside, around the window.

Finally he gives up, crouches and opens the suitcase.

# EXT. ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

The police officers are around the open door, hesitating. None of them wants to get hit. Finally:

COP #1

Maybe we should throw some gas in there. You know...

COP #2

D'you have some?

COP #1

Some what?

COP #2

Some gas.

COP #1

What kind of question is that? Of course I don't. D'you wise ass have a better idea?

COP #2

Sure. We walk in.

He does it, his gun pointed.

Nothing bad happens, so some other cops follow him inside, their guns and flashlights pointed.

They all hold their noses. There's a strong smell inside.

## INT. BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

SECOND FLOOR

HOOD #2 looks to have bad pain. He takes his hood off. He's white, dark-haired, about thirty. He sweats and suffers so much that he doesn't seem to notice the horrible smell.

We don't see what he's doing.

FIRST FLOOR

The cops search all the rooms on the first floor. After a while:

COP #1

He's upstairs.

COP #2

No shit, man.

COP #1

Or downstairs.

COP #3

(shaking his head)

Okay. You go up, I go down, how's that?

COP #4

Hey, easy. We have to stay all together. You don't wanna to get killed silently, huh?

COP #1

We all go upstairs.

COP #3

What about a part of us going up, and the other part going down?

Some noise makes them look... up.

SECOND FLOOR

HOOD #2 has started to work on the wood again. He manages to take some away, then more and more.

FIRST FLOOR

The cops find the stairs and walk up, their guns pointed.

SECOND FLOOR

HOOD #2 hears the footsteps. He turns his head to the sound.

The cops get on the landing and split. Some of them, two or three, get in every room.

There are two of them, rushing inside the 'good' room. HOOD #2 starts yelling like he's possessed by demons as he runs to them, firing his gun. One of the cops is hit in the left shoulder. He's flung backwards, outside the room. The other cop opens fire and shoots the robber. Two, three, four bullets hit him at point blank. He's also flung backwards and drops on his back, dead.

All the other cops rush in, they find the one, his gun still pointed at the dead body, like expecting he would stand up and start shooting again.

The room is lighted more than the others. The window is broken and there's a hole in the wood behind it.

They walk around the dead body, their guns still pointed at it.

The cop who shot the robber turns and walks out, he gets on the landing. His name is RICK. The one who was with him is unconscious but still alive. He crouches beside him. RICK

Somebody call an ambulance!

ANOTHER COP

We've already done it. Should be here in a couple of minutes.

(He looks at the man down.)

How's he?

RICK

He should be okay. He's not deadly shot.

The OTHER COP crouches beside RICK and the hit cop.

OTHER COP

He's hit in the shoulder.

RICK

So why the hell is he passed-out?

OTHER COP

Don't know. He must have a poor constitution.

(A break, as he stands back up.)

All right. I'll check the fuckin' guy's name. You'll have it before the stretchers come in.

RICK

Take your time, man. There's no rush here.

## EXT. ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

The alley is full now, with people and cars. All kinds of cars keep converging.

## INT. MORGUE - LATE AFTERNOON

A big hall, quite strongly lightened with a pale, white light. The walls are filled with metallic drawers, all closed. Several tables with bodies covered with white, blank sheets, lying on them, fill the tiled floor. We are inside a morgue.

The CORONER, a 45-year-old man in his white uniform, is leading a group of young TRAINEES around the hall. He stops in front of a table, the others beside and behind him. He

uncovers the body lying on the table, showing the head first. It's a man, around 35.

#### CORONER

Good-looking one here. A businessman with no police record. He had everything in life. Gorgeous wife, good kids, great house, plenty of money and cars. Then one night, there's an argue at home, his wife loses it first, she opens a drawer, picks up a small gun and...

He uncovers the body to the waist. The businessman is dressed the same way businessmen are. Except for the bloody bullet impacts.

CORONER (cont'd)
His wife is now in hospital,
catatonic. She's to be transferred
to an insane asylum.

ONE TRAINEE What about the kids?

## CORONER

Don't know. Remember this, ladies and gentlemen: in this job there's no room and time for crying. What happened to people before they died doesn't concern you. It's the police business, not yours. As a coroner your job is only to find out the cause of the decease. For instance, this one has been shot. But you may get shot two, three, four times in the chest, it's not enough to kill you for good. That's why, even in a case like this, you need to open the body and check the organs, the spine, the throat, the skull, all vital things inside a body. You never know. Come on.

He covers the body back, then he walks to another table and covered body, followed by the others. He uncovers the body completely. It's a young woman.

The CORONER points at her throat.

CORONER

Apparently strangled. Right? But she had drugs problems, so we're not sure. We'll work on her later.

ANOTHER TRAINEE

Was she married?

CORONER

Check her hands.

They check her hands.

CORONER (cont'd)

See, no ring, so she was not married. Or maybe she was, but her husband took the ring off her finger after he did her. Or some other fuckin' guy did, for some stupid reason. Or... or... just forget about it. When you work in this kind of place you need to have no feelings at all, of any kind. The guys are dead, there's nothing left you can do for them. Do you understand? When you're dead, you're dead. Married or not, you're just dead. There's nothing left.

Next.

He covers the body completely and walks to another table, followed by his TRAINEES. He uncovers the head. A man with gray hair.

CORONER (cont'd)

He was 52 years old. Heart attack. But it doesn't mean he was heart-sick, or that his heart suddenly let him down, just like that. This kind of decease can also be caused by a violent blow, struck straight to the heart area. He'll have his autopsy too, like every dead body else. Next...

He covers the head and walks to another table. He uncovers the body, head first.

CORONER (cont'd)

This one is a special case. You can see he's been shot in the head.

(MORE)

CORONER (cont'd)

Right in the forehead.

(He uncovers the dressed body to the waist.)

He also has bullet impacts on his chest. The work of a hitman, in my opinion.

ANOTHER TRAINEE

You mean this is part of a series?

CORONER

Probably. Some guy with a death list. First he shoots his target in the chest one or twice in order to paralyze him, then he finishes the job, shooting him in the head to make sure the guy dies. Remember what I just told you about being shot several times in the chest and still being able to stay alive? This is the work of a professional. I have two similar cases in closed drawers, right in this room. There's a police investigation on this. All right, next one.

He covers the body completely. As he walks to another table there's a noise from the entrance door and...

# INT. MORGUE - LATE AFTERNOON

... his ASSISTANT shows up, pushing a rolling litter in front of him. They all go to him as he keeps coming.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

I need a table.

CORONER

(pointing at a corner)

There's one over there.

His ASSISTANT keeps pushing the litter to the showed direction. He manages to put it just beside the empty table.

Then, with the help of his boss, he takes the body and lifts it from the litter, putting it on the table.

The dead body is HOOD 2's.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

A gangster, shot dead by the police a short time ago.

CORONER

(disconcerted)

By the police?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Yes.

CORONER

Then what did they send it over here for?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT I don't know. They'll give you a phone call about this.

# INT. BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Two DETECTIVES in plain clothes, named CONNORS and BAILEY, step inside the room where the shooting occurred.

The room is bright now. All the wood has been taken away from the two windows. But it's still dirty and the smell is still there.

The dead body and the wounded cop have been taken away already. The spot where the dead body was, has been cleaned and marked.

CONNORS

I heard there were two of them.

RICK

The other one is gone.

Most of the other police guys have left.

BAILEY

You mean he's dead too?

RICK

No. He ran away.

CONNORS

With all the loot?

RICK

We don't know nothing about it yet. But yes, probably.

BAILEY

(pointing at the mark on the floor)

What happened with this one?

RICK

I guess he tried to shoot his way out of here.

CONNORS

He didn't have a chance!

RICK

(shrugging)

He tried anyway.

CONNORS

(nodding)

All right. Good work.

RICK

You call this a good work?

CONNORS

Yes. You did everything you could. And you did one of them. It was you or him.

RICK

We didn't do 'em both. One of 'em guys is on the loose, with all the jewels. And the other one is dead, unable to say anything.

CONNORS

That's our business now. Don't worry about it.

RICK doesn't say anything. He just looks at the guys, upset. Then he walks out.

CONNORS looks at the marked spot on the floor.

BAILEY

And we still don't have a name on his face.

CONNORS

Maybe he was from another city.

BAILEY

Or maybe he'd just started in the robbery business.

They remain silent for a moment, their eyes down.

BAILEY (cont'd)

Well? What d'you think of this?

CONNORS

Confusing, man. The guy still had the jewels when he stepped in this building, right?

BAILEY

Sure thing.

CONNORS

Now he's dead, we find him but not the jewels. They're gone. Where?

He walks to the window and looks outside.

BAILEY

Perhaps in this building. See all this mess? He could have buried 'em in here. There are hundreds of places here to hide anything.

CONNORS

(shrugging, stepping away
from the window)

I wouldn't have done that, if I were him. This whole building is not secret enough. And it may get demolished, one day or another.

BAILEY

You're not him, man.

CONNORS stops... and walks back to the window.

CONNORS

Sure I'm not him... I'm still alive, he's fuckin' dead.

Below, there is some sort of a lot with all kinds of garbage

and high bad grass... all over the place. He looks down and locates something in the grass.

CONNORS (cont'd)

Hey, come have a look!

BAILEY joins him by the window.

CONNORS (cont'd)

Over there, in the grass... don't you see it?

BAILEY has a good look. He sees a black, rectangular object, deep in the grass, among the dirt.

BAILEY

The suitcase...

CONNORS

Maybe just a suitcase...

They run out anyway.

## INT. BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

They get downstairs and after a while they locate a closed door, opening on the lot. There's a handle, BAILEY turns it but the door remains closed. He uses his body, especially his shoulder... nothing happens, the door doesn't move.

CONNORS

Let me try.

He tries in his turn... with no more success.

BAILEY turns to the people who are present on the first floor.

BAILEY

Hey!!

CONNORS

Shut up, man.

(He pulls out his qun.)

That door must be all rusted. Even a good key won't open it.

He fires, two, three times, at the bolt. Then he uses his body and the door moves slowly to the outside. As soon as there's enough space, both men get out on the lot.

## EXT. LOT - DUSK

Both DETECTIVES pull out their flashlights and turn them on. They look up at the broken wood, using it to try to locate the suitcase.

After a moment they find it. First they look at it, using their flashlights. The suitcase is smashed by a bullet impact, but there's still no dirt on it, good shape.

CONNORS puts plastic gloves on, then he takes the suitcase by its sides and opens it.

It's empty.

BAILEY

Of course. What did we expect? The National Treasure?

CONNORS

And why is it empty, huh? (shaking his head)
I really don't get it!

BAILEY

Maybe his accomplice came over and took the jewels away...

CONNORS

... and left the suitcase here? It doesn't make any sense.

BAILEY

Maybe he did that to confuse us.

CONNORS

Confuse us about what?

BAILEY is unable to give an answer, except this:

BAILEY

This is fuckin' nuts...

He shakes his head in his turn.

CONNORS

(after a little while)
Okay, we got two choices. The other
guy did take the stuff away...

BAILEY

... or the stuff is still inside there, hidden somewhere.

CONNORS

Which doesn't make any sense either.

BAILEY

And we'll have to make a report on this, man!

CONNORS

That's what scares me the most. We're gonna be seen as rookie dummies.

They walk back to the door, CONNORS carrying the empty suitcase, keeping his hands away from the handle. They walk through the open door.

## INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

MAIN ROOM

They walk in the police station's main room, through an open door. As the two DETECTIVES walk through it, CONNORS puts the suitcase on a table. Then they both take seats behind their own respective desks, CONNORS taking his gloves off.

A POLICEMAN in plain clothes shows up, pointing at the suitcase.

POLICEMAN

Whose is this?

CONNORS

Don't touch it. Piece of evidence. Or if you wanna touch it, keep your hands away from the handle.

POLICEMAN

Where does it come from?

The two DETECTIVES don't answer both questions. Instead:

BAILEY

Where's the lieutenant?

POLICEMAN

He's dealing with the press. Should be here in a couple of minutes.

#### CORRIDOR

The LIEUTENANT EDSON, a white, tough-looking guy, around 50, walks along a corridor towards a compact group of REPORTERS, who rush to him as soon as they see him, with some police officers in uniforms trying to keep them back.

Without seeming to worry, he walks his way through the group, saying "no comment" almost every time a question is asked. Until one of the questions is this:

REPORTER

According to the store owners, the loot's worth over half a million dollars, what d'you have to say about this?

**EDSON** 

What d'you want me to say about this? "Good for the thieves?" One of 'em is dead. We'll get the other one and get the stuff back.

He starts walking again, paying no attention to any other question asked. He reaches the main room's door, he enters the room and closes the door on the reporters.

## MAIN ROOM

He walks to a coffee machine and puts two coins in a slot. As he waits for his cup, facing the machine all the way, some cops show up behind him. He takes his ready cup of coffee out of the machine and turns, facing his deputies and waiting for their oral reports - what they have to say.

BAILEY

The suitcase is in here.

EDSON

Still with nothing in it?

BAILEY

(smiling)

I quess so.

EDSON

(grinning)

All right, no problem.

He sees the suitcase, walks to it, then he puts a pair of

gloves on and starts to handle it, keeping his hands away from the handle.

EDSON (cont'd)

So what do we got? Probably the robbery of the year.

(As he keeps handling the suitcase)

Only two guys to do it, they manage to escape from police agents when they don't have a car... one of 'em is shot and we inherit his empty suitcase.

(He puts the suitcase back on the table.)

What can this teach us? Was it part of their plan? One of 'em getting shot so the other can run away with all of it?

CONNORS

We're not sure about that.

**EDSON** 

What are you sure about?

CONNORS

Nothing yet.

EDSON

That's right. And that's the problem we've got here.

BAILEY

The suitcase is smashed. It was full before it got hit open by one of our bullets. They didn't plan that.

Among the cops is the one who managed to shoot the suitcase open during the chase. His name is CARLOS. RICK is there too.

CARLOS

Basically the dead guy had to pick up the stuff and put it back in the suitcase before he walked in that building. I saw him doing that, sir.

CONNORS

The other guy had no possibility (MORE)

CONNORS (cont'd)

to take all the stuff away. He got only half.

EDSON

Haven't you thought about the possibility of a third suitcase, or a bag?

CARLOS

Personally I didn't see any such thing. I saw two guys carrying one suitcase each. That's all.

CONNORS

And it wasn't part of their plan to end up in that lane. They had a car too.

CARLOS

One more thing: after I shot the suitcase open the two guys separated on both sides of the lane. I didn't see 'em exchange or transfer anything.

**EDSON** 

(nodding with approval)

I see.

(He looks at RICK.)

How's your partner?

RICK

I don't know. He's in hospital.

EDSON

What d'you think happened before you shot the guy? What d'you think he did?

RICK

He spent a long time upstairs, and it was all dark, so he had all the time to do anything before.

EDSON

Anything... like what?

They're all on RICK, staring at him, waiting for his answer. RICK is very upset about all of it, he looks like he thinks he doesn't have to take this.

RICK

Well... putting the loot away from us.

EDSON

Sure. But how could he do that?

RICK

I don't know.

BAILEY

We've checked the building's first floor, and we found nothing, no jewels, no sewer, nothing to be used as a hiding spot. We're now working on the second floor, expecting a phone call at any time.

RICK

You bet you didn't find nothing in there.

BAILEY

I beg your pardon?

RICK

What proves me you didn't take the stuff from the suitcase, after you found it?

BAILEY

(shocked, his mouth wide open)

WHAT ??

RICK

(to EDSON)

Why don't you ask them what happened? They found the suitcase, I didn't.

CONNORS

Hey, you shut the fuck up, hot shot!

EDSON

Hey, now easy, all of you!
 (to RICK)

You, you go into my office and stay there, waiting for me.

RICK shivers. He doesn't move right away.

EDSON (cont'd)

You're still here? Do as I say.

RICK walks away.

BAILEY

I'll kill that sucker.

EDSON

I said easy.

CONNORS

I know him, he's no fuckin' good. He'd sell his own mum...

**EDSON** 

All right! I'll take care of him.

CONNORS

You'll fire his ass?

EDSON

I'll do something about him. I won't let him call you guys thieves and get away with it. So...

(a break)

... what do we need to do now?

BAILEY

Search the building. It's pretty messy, especially on the first floor.

CARLOS

That's what we're already doing out there.

EDSON

Is that all we can do now? What about the car?

CONNORS

Stolen. Nothing interesting inside. But we're working on eventual fingerprints.

EDSON

Why was the store open anyway?

CARLOS

It's a French store. With managers from other countries. They don't celebrate our Independence Day.

**EDSON** 

All right. What about the garbage bins along the lane?

CONNORS

The garbage bins?

**EDSON** 

Yeah, the garbage bins. Especially those around that door. Have they been checked?

BAILEY

I don't know...

EDSON

(to CARLOS)

How close to such bins were the two guys before they had to separate?

CARLOS

As a matter of fact they were pretty close, sir.

EDSON

Good. Well I think all we need to do now is make sure the lane is still closed to the public and keep checking the building as well as all the bins, especially those around that door. Right?

Some policemen say "right", the others just nod with approval.

EDSON

(to both DETECTIVES)

You two go back there and make sure the bins are searched as they need to be.

CONNORS

We'll let you know.

EDSON nods and walks away to his office, while the other cops separate.

## INT. EDSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

He gets into his office. RICK is sitting on one of the two chairs in front of the desk. When EDSON comes in he stands up.

EDSON

Good. Stay on your feet.

He goes behind his desk, has a seat and looks up at RICK, who's quite tense and worried, expecting the worst to come from the lieutenant's mouth. Is he about to fire him?

EDSON (cont'd)

I can guess what you're thinking. And you know what? I'm not gonna fire you. I'm not even gonna blame you. I think you're the large-type asshole and I don't trust you, but you got guts and that's what counts around here.

RICK tries not to show the relief he's feeling right now. But it's hard.

EDSON (cont'd)

Listen carefully. I'm gonna call an autopsy on the guy you shot tonight. And you, you're going to the municipal morgue right away and supervise it.

RICK

Oh . . .

EDSON

Is that a problem to you?

RICK

Er... hell no, sir.

**EDSON** 

(grinning)

I suppose you have a date tonight?

RICK

No, sir.

EDSON

I hope you're not kidding me on this.

RICK

I'm not, sir.

**EDSON** 

You tell me the truth or I have your ass fired right now!

RICK lowers his head.

RICK

Well... er... as a matter of fact, sir...

**EDSON** 

... there's a girl getting horny for you right at this moment.

RICK

(blushing)

Er...

EDSON

And you can't wait for the hot date.

RICK

As a matter of fact I can wait, sir.

EDSON

You bet you can! You're going to the morgue right now, all by yourself, and supervise the autopsy. Then you'll make a complete report. I want it on my desk before midnight. You hear?

RICK

I hear it, sir. I hear it.

EDSON

Good. Now get out of here.

RICK turns and walks out.

Once he's out of the office he mumbles something like "fuckin' pig" as he keeps walking through the room.

## EXT. LANE - NIGHT

CONNORS and BAILEY are back in the lane, supervising the checking and searching of all the garbage bins all along, especially those that are close to that door. They do it along with a couple of other detectives who just walk around along the lane, watching some other guys inside the bins as they turn them upside down.

No luck, all the bins happen to be full, and it doesn't smell good, so a look of disgust often appears on the searchers' faces.

## EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A police car rolls slowly to the entrance of the municipal morgue.

## INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Inside the car are two policemen in civilian plain clothes. One of them is RICK, he's the driver. He looks still upset and in the same time, perplexed about nothing specific. The other one is LONNIE, the young rookie. He's quite relax.

As the car stops by the entrance, LONNIE asks:

LONNIE

How's Pete?

RICK

You're asking me this only now? Now we're in front of the morgue?

LONNIE

How's he doing?

RICK

You could have asked me this much earlier, man! You had all the time to do that! Why the hell doing this in front of a building with plenty of dead bodies inside?

LONNIE

Hey, what the hell is your problem, man? I'm asking you a simple question!

RICK

Stupid question to ask now and here! What about if I tell you that Pete's passed away, and that he's about to be opened in two in that same morgue, how's that?

LONNIE

I would believe you.

RICK

(shaking his head)
Shit. How long have you been in the police force?

LONNIE

Not long.

RICK

That's what I figured. Is that gonna be your first autopsy?

LONNIE

Yeah...

RICK

Why in your opinion do they want an autopsy on a guy who got shot four times in the chest?

LONNIE looks at RICK, then at the morgue entrance, then, after a short pause:

LONNIE

Maybe in order to show the public that the investigation is rock 'n rolling hard.

RICK looks at him, pleasantly surprised. He smiles.

RICK

You know what? I think you can manage in there all by yourself.

LONNIE

What? You're not coming with me?

RICK

No.

LONNIE

Why not?

RICK

Because you're smart enough. You just proved it to me.

LONNIE

Really?

RICK

Yeah. A rookie smartass. Now listen to this. You're gonna get in there. I'll stay in the car. But we won't lose contact, okay? We'll stay in radio touch. Once you're in there, you turn on your radio and that's it, okay? Don't use it to communicate with me.

LONNIE looks at him for a short moment, then...

LONNIE

Okay... Okay, no problem.

RICK

You won't miss anything inside there, and I won't either.

LONNIE

Why don't you wanna come in?

RICK

Because I'm the one who shot the guy. I don't wanna see him again, lying on a table.

LONNIE

Yeah... I kind of understand that.

RICK

Okay, kid, go now.

LONNIE gets out of the car, then he looks at RICK through the window.

LONNIE

You still didn't answer my question.

RICK

(sighing)

Pete's all right. I was upset about your question 'cause as you know, he's got shot tonight. And I was there. If he got hit just a few inches lower...

LONNIE

All right. I promise to be more tactful in the future.

He gets inside the building.

RICK

(grinning, shaking his head) Rookies... I love them.

As soon as LONNIE is out of sight he drives away.

## INT. MORGUE - TIMELESS

A big door, which opens on large marble stairs lighted by wall lamps.

Someone behind the door knocks three times.

Soon a MAN shows up, climbing the stairs. He wears a white overall. He gets on the last but one step of the stairs and opens the door. A shadow shows in the opening.

We can see from the light of the lamps that the newcomer wears an ecclesiastical suit. There's a little gilded cross hanging through his chest. He has a moustache, he's slightly bearded and looks 35.

The man in the white overall stares at him, quite surprised.

MAN IN THE WHITE OVERALL

Good evening, Father.

The PRIEST gets on the first step.

PRIEST

(shaking hands with him) Good evening, my Son.

The other one casts a quick glance at him, before closing the door.

MAN IN THE WHITE OVERALL Are you the man coming for the autopsy?

PRIEST

I am. Are you the doctor in charge of the operation?

MAN IN THE WHITE OVERALL No, I'm only his assistant. We're not alone, downstairs: there's also a policeman with us.

PRIEST

A c... a police officer?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Yes.

PRIEST

Hmmm. This doesn't sound very fair to me... But I imagine that this man is not one of those who shot the poor guy. That would be an offend to the Lord.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT I don't think so.

PRIEST

Then he was sent by the Lord Himself.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT No, he was by the commissioner. To check out something.

PRIEST

Really? And what is it?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
He didn't say and anyway, that's his own business.

PRIEST

Except him, only God knows... But the ways of God can't be broken, ain't I right, my Son?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT (a little dazed)
Er... yes, Father. Absolutely.

They keep walking down the stairs and end up in the same big hall we saw before, lighted with the same pale white light, with walls filled with the same metallic drawers, all closed. Around one of the tables filling the tiled floor, on which is lying a half-uncovered body, stand the CORONER and a young civilian, LONNIE, the rookie cop.

The PRIEST steps forward in the hall.

PRIEST

(with his devout tone)
Glory to the Lord, gentlemen. Glory to the Lord, my brothers.

The CORONER is busy grinding his implements. He peacefully raises his head, like he was expecting such an introduction. He frees his right hand and holds it out.

CORONER

Good evening, Father.

They shake hands.

CORONER (cont'd)

How are you doing, today?

PRIEST

As good as Heaven can allow us, poor mortal people.

CORONER

You look in great condition.

PRIEST

Indeed, Doctor. Indeed. As you know, I just came here to bring good luck to this poor soul, then I'll get back on my way.

He turns to LONNIE, the civilian, who stands still, saying nothing.

PRIEST (cont'd)

And I suppose this is the young representative of Law and Order?

LONNIE

(smiling slightly and shaking hands with him) Good evening. PRIEST

(looking around him)
Well, well! Can you imagine this? The
Church, the Police and the medicine
represented here, today, for the autopsy
of a man who, according to what was
said about him, didn't believe in God,
was a complete ignorant about science
and couldn't stand the police!

LONNIE

Yeah, what the hell? The world is this way. Always badly made of.

PRIEST

(looking outraged)

Oh please, don't you say that! He was a lost and tortured soul, who henceforth won't ever be in trouble again, because he's under shelter now and for eternity, between the Lord's hands and in His holly sanctuary...

LONNIE

(looking at him, his eyes
wide open)

I don't doubt it, Father.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

He had to be in a damned lot of trouble, to end with his chest that leaded.

LONNIE

Yeah, I guess so. We still don't know who he is. We didn't find any ID on him. We took his fingerprints, we put them in the computer and we didn't find anything, no file, no criminal record, nothing. I suppose that's why they want an autopsy on his body.

PRIEST

(looking at the corpse)
If he'd had faith, he'd have made it.

The three men look at him, stunned.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
Do you really believe so, Father?

PRIEST

You have to believe, gentlemen. In the sight of the Lord, the sinners who believe in Him deserve to be saved.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT and LONNIE take huge pains not to burst out laughing.

The CORONER keeps preparing, paying no attention to the others.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

(after a moment)

Did he have any family?

LONNIE

How can we know? It doesn't look like. But maybe we'll see more during the funeral. If there is any.

PRIEST

He entered God's family I am part of, don't forget about it. He's a little like my brother now.

LONNIE and the CORONER'S ASSISTANT look at him, half-respectuous, half-hilarious.

CORONER

(putting his mask on)
I'm beginning, gentlemen.

His assistant puts his mask on too.

PRIEST

Do it, doctor.

He crosses himself and folds his hands, still watching the body.

The CORONER turns his bistoury in his hand, pretending to inspect its outlines, then he looks down at the dead man's chest.

His ASSISTANT comes along and takes up his stand beside him, while LONNIE gets to the end of the table. The PRIEST is alone on the other side of the table, observing the scene peacefully.

During the operation, the CAMERA remains directed on the

CORONER's face, taking his expression, and the movement of his shoulders and his upper arms.

He moves abruptly and a METALLIC SOUND suddenly gets heard, followed by other ones, coming with his gestures. The expression of his face changes. So does that of his ASSISTANT's.

LONNIE comes to them, taking up his stand beside them.

The PRIEST stands still, totally peaceful, his face impassive.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT opens his mouth wide, looking suddenly stunned.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT In the name of God, look at that!

In spite of the increasing surprise, the CORONER keeps operating. He holds out his hand to his assistant.

CORONER

Forceps.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Sorry?

CORONER

(moving his held out hand insistently)

Forceps!

His ASSISTANT shakes himself and gives him the required tool.

The CORONER plunges it in the interstice and soon lets out a NECKLACE, raised in the air. Then he lowers the necklace and starts staring at the body's face.

CORONER

These are... these are jewels. JEWELRY...!

LONNIE

(totally amazed)
Son-of-a-bitch! He swallowed 'em!
Handfuls of those!

He bangs his forehead with the flat of his hand.

### INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

RICK can hear everything of course. He freezes, staring at his radio, not believing his ears.

LONNIE (v.o., cont'd) Shit! I can't believe this!

#### INT. MORGUE - TIMELESS

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
He's filled up with that damn stuff.
A hell of a way to feed yourself!

The two others and him are so stupefied about what they see, so lost in this sight that they don't see anything coming.

A hand appears, putting a gun to the coroner's head.

Still aiming at the CORONER, the PRIEST uses his left hand to take out another gun he puts on the policeman.

PRIEST

Don't move!

The others gape at him.

PRIEST (cont'd)

(with a little sardonic smile)

This is a robbery!

INT. POLICE CAR

RICK

FUCK !!

He drives back, making his tyres scream like crazy and some horns sound furiously.

INT. MORGUE

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Is that a joke, or what?

PRIEST

Yeah, could be. Could also be other dead bodies on the schedule, if I'm unlucky enough to lose my nerves. So don't fuck with me, right? Don't you (MORE)

PRIEST (cont'd)

make a move unless I tell you.
Everything's gonna be okay for you if
you don't do anything stupid.

CORONER

(shaking all over, the gun still pointed on his head) Please, Father...

PRIEST

Father? I'm not your father, and I ain't no stupid priest, either. I don't believe in God anyway, and religion is for crooks and jerks. Crooks like me, and jerks like you, who swallowed all the bullshit I gave you. It's a damn shame! Not surprising there are so many sects prospering in this world. You can make any bullshit believable to anybody.

LONNIE

I see... You're his accomplice, aren't you?

PRIEST

You got it at last.

LONNIE

Yeah... I should have suspected it.

PRIEST

Okay, now, enough mumbling.

He makes two steps backwards, taking some field, and points his left gun at the CORONER'S ASSISTANT.

PRIEST (cont'd)

You, there...

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Who, me?

PRIEST

Yeah, you! You're gonna take the policeman's gun, and drop it on the floor. Do it!

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT starts moving his arm.

PRIEST (cont'd)

And you better do it easy, very easy. The first finger of yours moving to the trigger, and I clean up your head.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT does as he says. He slowly takes the cop's gun, holding it by the end of its grip, and drops it on the floor. LONNIE's lips are tightened together.

PRIEST (cont'd)

Use your foot to push it to me, under the table. Do it frankly.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT obeys. The gun comes along, sliding on the floor, reaching the priest's foot.

PRIEST (cont'd)

Good.

He puts down his right hand, puts his left one behind his suit and takes out a new, carefully folded trash bag he throws at the CORONER.

PRIEST (cont'd)

Go on, doc, it's up to you. Use your forceps and put the diamonds in the bag. And if you can't do it another way, take the guts with. But only if you can't do it another way, understand?

The CORONER says nothing, starting to it. He unfolds the trash bag, takes the forceps in his right hand and does so.

LONNIE

You don't really think you're gonna get out of this, do you?

PRIEST

You can do it when you want to. Now shut the hell up.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Tell me, why did he swallow all them jewels? I can't figure this point...

PRIEST

What do you think? In order not to leave them to the cops. Actually we were the hell out of luck. The robbery was a piece (MORE)

PRIEST (cont'd)

of cake, but two cops were passing by in a car and they saw us. If we'd thought about gagging that fat stupid female jeweller, they wouldn't have spotted us. Anyway we had to run. We rushed in an alley, taking a complicated way I knew well about. We had one case each, and the cops hit his. A really lucky shot. They totally wasted his case. Two seconds later, all the jewels were on the ground.

(to the CORONER)

Hey, doc, get a move on! It's starting to stink pretty bad, and we don't have the whole day.

CORONER

I'm doing my best. You want to change places with me, maybe?

The PRIEST shrugs and gets back on with his little story.

INT. POLICE CAR

RICK keeps driving but he's caught in the traffic. He's boiling with self-anger and frustration.

PRIEST (v.o.)

I told him to forget about it and to move...

INT. MORGUE

PRIEST

... but he didn't wanna know shit about anything. I guess he already had his own idea about it. So I left. I suppose the cops didn't see him swallow all them diamonds before they got him, and that he preferred to make them waste him than see such a beautiful pile of money ending in the septic tank or in the cops' hands.

LONNIE

(frankly surprised)

And you came back to get that part of the loot?

PRIEST

Of course!

LONNIE

Why?

PRIEST

Because if not, you'd have got it instead of me. I knew it was risky, but I tried my luck anyway. I don't regret it. The hell I don't! As we say, the more you get the more you want, ain't it right?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Why did he make the cops shoot him? He could have got out of this with not much damage...

PRIEST

(smirking at him)
You're curious, ain't you?

LONNIE

(to the coroner's assistant)
Don't you believe that. He'd have taken
ten years, at least.

PRIEST

Yeah, I believe this. He wouldn't have stood it. Besides he hated the world, he didn't want it any more. I still can hear him saying: "In this world of shit, they give everything to those with everything already, and they give shit to those who got shit. So what do you want those with shit to do?" He wanted to leave with a first-class trick, and I'm here for this to work all the way.

(to the CORONER)

Hey doc, have you finished or not?

CORONER

(stiff all over)

Yes, yes. It's almost over. Give me a moment. There are plenty of them, you should know that...

His gloves are red with thick, dropping blood, and his forceps shows some small, torn pieces of guts.

LONNIE's face is more and more strained.

PRIEST

(smiling at him)

It's starting to smell real bad, isn't
it?

He suddenly puts his right hand back up.

PRIEST (cont'd)

OK now, don't make a stupid move, or I make a score, got it?

He lets a moment go.

PRIEST (cont'd)

What about a nip of whisky?

He puts his left hand behind his suit and takes out a flask.

PRIEST (cont'd)

This is good stuff, and maybe it'll help you to forget about the smell.

Since the others don't say anything, looking at him with envy mixed with some mistrust, he opens his flask and takes it up to his mouth and starts to drink. Or to pretend to be drinking.

He takes two gulps and sighs with comfort.

CORONER

It's over.

PRIEST

Well, we must drink to that! Want a sip?

CORONER

(shaking his head)

I don't drink.

LONNIE

I'd like some. I'm dry.

Rick still doesn't show up.

The PRIEST closes his flask and throws it at LONNIE, who catches it and opens it back and takes four big mouthfuls. The CORONER'S ASSISTANT also serves himself, taking three. Then he closes the flask and lays it by the body.

CORONER

What are you gonna do now? Kill us, after satisfying our last wills?

PRIEST

No, I'm gonna do better than that. You'll see.

He raises his right hand back, pointing his gun at the CORONER'S ASSISTANT.

PRIEST (cont'd)

You...

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

(stunned)

Me?

PRIEST

Yeah. Now you're gonna take the cop's blackjack. I mean, no...

He points the gun at LONNIE.

PRIEST (cont'd)

You're gonna give it to him. Right away, and don't say a word.

LONNIE obeys, looking furious.

The PRIEST points his gun back at the CORONER'S ASSISTANT.

PRIEST (cont'd)

Go stand behind the doc.

The ASSISTANT gets behind his boss.

PRIEST (cont'd)

And now hit him on the head, for him to get some sleep.

The CORONER leaps up, looking at him with round eyes and mouth.

PRIEST (cont'd)

The poor man must be washed out.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

(astounded)

Hey, wait a min...

PRIEST

Just do it. If not, the bullet which is gonna get across his chest, will end up into yours.

CORONER

(panicking)

Jesus Christ, you can't do that!

PRIEST

(ignoring him)

Come on, pal. You got only one gesture to make. I advise you to give it as much weight as you can.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT knocks his superior, hitting him good on the top of the head. The CORONER collapses by the table.

LONNIE

(blushing with anger)
You're gonna pay for this! You won't
get away with it, I promise you!

The PRIEST puts his gun down, looking satisfied, saying nothing.

Rick is still invisible.

#### INT. MORGUE - TIMELESS

Suddenly the two others start staggering. The CORONER'S ASSISTANT drops the blackjack which falls down on the floor with loud sounds. He has to use one hand to lean on the table in order to keep his balance, his other hand holding his head. LONNIE starts dancing from one foot to the other, feeling dizzy. He leans on the table too and closes his eyes and shakes his head strongly, trying to recover his losing mind.

LONNIE

What the hell is happening to me...

He opens his eyes back and looks at the PRIEST who's showing a slight smile.

LONNIE (cont'd)

You son-of-a-bitch!

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT falls in.

LONNIE (cont'd) (sinking down)
I'll get you...

He breaks down in his turn.

The PRIEST puts up his guns and takes out a white clean hankie, using it to pick up the policeman's gun and steps forward, smiling.

PRIEST

Sleep well, you chumps. Nothing better than a good knock on the head or a raw narcotic to have a good nap. You'll wake up feeling pretty dizzy, but it won't take long.

He stops by the body, staring at the face of the man for a moment.

PRIEST (cont'd)

You won, pal. Wherever you are, you must be splitting your ass laughing.
(He covers him with the sheet.)
I hope your second life will be funnier up there. Bye, my friend.

He uses the hankie to wipe the grip of Lonnie's gun and puts it back in his hip pocket.

Still using the hankie, he picks up the blackjack and puts it back the same way.

Then he gets the flask back and puts it into his own pocket and takes the spoiled trash bag and leaves the room through the stairs.

Soon we hear the sound of the big door closing.

Rick still doesn't show up.

Slow ZOOM IN on LONNIE's unconscious body and face as he starts having sort of a dream.

Or is he?

# EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

The PRIEST walks out of the morgue. He gets in a car parked a

few yards away from the police car. RICK is not in sight anywhere, not even in the police car.

The PRIEST starts his car and drives away from the building.

### EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The traffic is clear, so the PRIEST can drive rather quickly. He stops at a red light, takes out the two pistols and the flask from inside the ecclesiastic suit, then he gets rid of the suit and casts it onto the back seat.

The light turns green and he drives on.

#### EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Soon he stops by a four-floored building located in a residential, low-class area. He grabs the bloody bag, gets out of the car and starts walking to the entrance.

#### INT. CAR - NIGHT

While he keeps walking, a human shape appears inside the car, emerging from the floor, between the front and back seats.

It's RICK !!

## EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

The other guy uses a key to get inside the building, RICK doesn't stop him. He gets out of the car, walks backwards and looks up.

There's a light appearing on the top floor.

RICK nods, takes out his cell phone and dials a number.

#### INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Another cell phone rings inside a bedroom. There's a man lying on the single bed. It's the man who got shot in the shoulder. His name is PETE. His left arm is in a sling. He takes the device from the top of a bedside table.

PETE

Hello?

EXT. BUILDING

RICK

Pete, this is Rick. How are you doing?

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM

PETE

What d'you want?

EXT. BUILDING

RICK

Listen, I know where the jewels are. All of them.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM

PETE

(frowning suspiciously)
What are you talking about? How can you know about it?

EXT. BUILDING

RICK

I really can't tell you now, especially on the phone. You join me and I'll tell you the whole thing. Can you leave the hospital without being noticed?

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM

PETE

Er... Yes... Yes, sure I can. But... did you tell anybody about... what you know?

EXT. BUILDING

RICK

Of course I didn't.

PETE (v.o.)

Why not?

RICK

Don't you wanna get rich?

PETE (v.o.)

Sure, like everybody does, but...

RICK

Then get your ass over here, man. And above all, don't tell anybody. Keep your mouth shut.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM

PETE

All right. Can you give me an address?

(A silent pause, as Rick
 gives him an address.)
I'll be right there. Don't start
without me, huh?

EXT. BUILDING

RICK

You silly bastard, why the hell d'you think I called you? I'll be waiting. Good luck, man.

He hangs up.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM

PETE lays his cell phone on the bedside table and stays there, lying on his bed, for a short moment. Then he gets on his feet.

He feels dizzy for another short moment. He walks to a closet, opens it, and despite his arm he manages to take off his pyjamas and put his usual clothes on. Then he takes his coat out of the closet and puts it on, trying to hide his useless left arm as well as he can.

He walks out of the room.

#### INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDORS - NIGHT

He walks along the corridors, trying to be as quiet and cautious as possible, looking for elevators but without knowing exactly where to find them.

He finally finds them, pushes a button and waits for one of them to let him in. When one does, he walks in, along with three of four other people.

## INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator stops twice on its way down. Nobody pays attention to him.

## INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The elevator reaches the first floor and PETE walks out. He sees a sign showing the way to the exit and he starts walking, following the direction, trying not to speed and to look suspect.

He finally reaches the entrance door and walks out. Nobody has noticed him.

### EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

A bus stops not far from the building. PETE is the only one to get out of it. He runs to the building entrance. RICK stands not far from it.

RICK

Hello Pete. Did you have a hard time?

PETE

Piece of cake, man. I bet they still didn't notice me being not there any more.

There's the sound of a ring.

PETE (cont'd)

Shit!

RICK

Don't take the call. Turn it off.

PETE takes out his cell phone, cuts the ringing and turns his phone off. RICK does the same with his.

RICK (cont'd)

I just called the janitor, he will be down here in a couple of minutes.

PETE

Good. Now... can you tell me what's going on here?

RICK

Sure, sure.

(He looks around, making sure nobody can hear what he has to say.)

The guy who shot you today, he'd swallowed the jewels he had with him, before trying to shoot his way out through us. His accomplice came over to the morgue later for the autopsy and he managed to collect the stuff back. He lives here.

PETE

(flabbergasted)

How could you find out...?

RICK

You'll know it... when I tell the guy. Don't be in such a hurry. D'you wanna waste all the mystery? Keep some for later.

PETE

Which floor?

RICK

The last one.

PETE

(suddenly enraged)

Bastard!!

RICK

You're with me?

PETE

You bet I am. I'm sick of getting my ass kicked. I bet you a million bucks the son-of-a-bitch up there is celebrating right now. He thinks he already won. That he did the perfect job.

RICK

That's where he's wrong.

PETE

I'm really excited about this, man.

RICK

Really?

PETE

Yeah. Fuckin' A.

RICK

Here he comes.

Somebody is coming all right. It's the JANITOR. He unlocks the door and opens it.

The two cops produce their badges.

RICK

Police. Good evening, mister. Sorry to disturb you now, but we need you to lead us to somebody's apartment.

JANITOR

What for, gentlemen?

RICK

An arrest.

JANITOR

(stunned)

An arrest?

RICK

Yes. Could you let us in, please?

**JANITOR** 

Sure.

(He lets the two cops in.)
Please follow me to my office,
we'll be better off there to talk.

PETE

Thank you.

They follow him.

## INT. JANITOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

RICK

We're after somebody who robbed a jewelry store tonight. He lives on the top floor in an apartment facing the main street. (MORE) RICK (cont'd)

He's around six feet high, with hair between gray and brown. D'you see who we're talking about?

The JANITOR makes some thinking, then he nods.

**JANITOR** 

I think so, yes.

RICK

Can you give us his name?

**JANITOR** 

It's Colby. Darren Colby.

PETE

We'd need you to help us on this. He wouldn't open the door to us, but he'll do it for you. We need you to make him unlock his door. We'll take care of the rest.

RICK

Do you know if somebody else lives there with him? Wife, girlfriend, brother, such thing...?

**JANITOR** 

He lives up there by himself. But how can you be so sure...

RICK

Being sure is part of our job, sir.

JANITOR

Of course, of course... Would you like me to call some back-up for you...?

RICK

We'll do it ourselves, if we ever need any, all right? Now... can you help us?

**JANITOR** 

Sure.

RICK

Okay. Do it and I'll promise you that nobody will ever know the guy was (MORE)

RICK (cont'd)

living in your building. You'll get all our discretion.

**JANITOR** 

Thanks. I'll take the keys of the apartment.

PETE

Right.

The JANITOR walks to another room and disappears.

RICK

(to PETE)

Stay here. I'll check the guy.

He walks the same way and disappears.

He stands by a wall, observing the JANITOR checking a board of keys on a wall. He takes one out and turns. RICK turns away.

The JANITOR gets back in his office, with a key and some package in his right hand.

JANITOR

Let's go.

## INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

They walk out of an elevator, then along a short corridor, the JANITOR ahead, the two cops behind.

They stop by a door. The JANITOR stands in front, the two cops on both sides, their backs stuck to the wall, their guns in their hands, ready to be used. The JANITOR rings the bell. We can hear footsteps getting closer.

## INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

COLBY, the pro robber, reaches his door and looks through the spyhole. There's a gun in his right hand. He sees the JANITOR... and nobody else.

COLBY

Who is it?

### INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

**JANITOR** 

Janitor talking. I got a package for you.

COLBY'S VOICE

A package?

JANITOR

Yeah, it was in my office.

(He takes it up, for Colby to be able to see it through his spyhole.)

You weren't there when the postman brought it this morning. Please open the door so I can give it to you.

COLBY'S VOICE

Just put it on the floor, please.

**JANITOR** 

I need a signature.

COLBY'S VOICE

(after quite a long break)

Okay.

He gets away from the spyhole and unlocks the door.

RICK doesn't hesitate: he gets in front of the door and violently kicks it open.

### INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door hits COLBY in the face, he's flung backwards in his apartment and falls heavily on his back. The shock forces him to let his gun go.

The two cops rush inside the apartment.

COLBY sees them, turns towards his lost gun, locates it and crawls quickly to it. RICK sees the gun too and runs. COLBY lays his hand on it but within the next second RICK crushes his hand with his foot.

COLBY starts screaming like crazy. PETE comes over and kicks him in the face, just once.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

PETE'S VOICE

Shut the fuck up...

FADE IN - COLBY'S POV

COLBY is knocked down, his nose and mouth bleed like hell but he's not totally unconscious. He can hardly see, but he still can hear some voices.

RICK'S VOICE

(to the janitor)

It's okay mister, thanks for your help. He was armed, so we had to shake him a little bit. We're gonna start to question him here for a few minutes, then we'll continue at the headquarters. Don't you worry, we won't make any trouble here. Good night.

There is the sound of a door closing.

COLBY loses consciousness.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

# INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

COLBY, RICK and PETE are now in the kitchen, around a table. COLBY is sitting on a chair, still unconscious. We don't see that he's tied to the chair. RICK and PETE are also seated, RICK facing COLBY, PETE on one side, both watching him.

RICK finally stands up and goes to the sink. He fills a big glass, then he comes to COLBY, pulls his hair to move his head backwards and pours the water on his face.

RICK

Time to wake up, you lazy son-of-a-bitch.

COLBY wakes up, shaking his head and blinking several times, while RICK goes back to his chair and puts the glass on the table.

The two cops leave him the time to recover completely, to have a good stare at them... and to realize he's tied to the chair. When he does, they laugh under their breaths.

COLBY

(gasping)

Who the hell are you?

RICK and PETE look at each other. Then they sigh as they make the classical gesture: they produce their badges.

PETE

Police.

COLBY

What are you doing in my place? What d'you want from me? What did you beat me up for? What does that mean?

RICK

(to PETE)

Which question are we supposed to answer in the first place?

PETE

(shaking his head)

Don't know, man. Your choice. I'm overwhelmed.

RICK looks back at COLBY.

RICK

Okay. We've been chasing a guy who robbed two places tonight. A jewelry store... and a morque.

Both cops laugh.

RICK (cont'd)

A morgue, man!

PETE

The fuckin' guy's got guts, I'll give him that.

COLBY

So? What are you doing here? Go look somewhere else! And don't forget to untie me first, before you leave!

RICK and PETE laugh again.

PETE

Oh no, man. The guy we're talking of is right in front of us, man. It's you.

RICK

D'you think we're fuckin' stupid? What d'you think? We searched your whole place while you were passedout. And guess what we found?

He produces the suitcase, lays it on the table in front of COLBY and opens it.

The suitcase is full of high-value jewels of all kinds, necklaces, rings, bracelets, etc.

PETE

Can you tell us how such valuable things could have ended up in this place?

COLBY

How... how did you find me?

RICK

The radio, pal. Among the people who were present during the autopsy, at the morgue, there was a cop, remember?

COLBY

Yes...

RICK

Well, his radio was connected to mine. I was outside the morgue, I heard everything that happened.

PETE didn't know about it. He has a look at RICK.

COLBY

Why didn't you show up?

RICK

Because I needed you to lead me to the other half of the stuff. I took the risk.

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)

(To PETE:)

And I did right, huh?

PETE

Fuckin' A!

He was smiling.

RICK

I saw you coming over to the morgue in a car, then walking in, dressed as a priest. I got inside your car while you were operating so brilliantly.

COLBY

(flabbergasted)

You were inside my car?

RICK

Yeah. On all your way home.

(A break.)

Okay, man. You're under arrest. You have the right to remain silent...

He interrupts himself, shaking his head, and PETE and him laugh one more time.

RICK (cont'd)

Shit, let's cut that kind of crap.

(To COLBY:)

Are you hungry?

 ${\tt COLBY}$ 

What are you talking about?

RICK

I'm saying, 'Are you hungry?'

COLBY doesn't know right away what to answer. The question is too bizarre.

COLBY

Y... Yes, but...

RICK

I'll give you the meal of the day. Stay there.

RICK stands back up and walks to a closet. He takes a plate out of there, and handles it rather carefully while taking it to the table.

He lays it on the table, in front of COLBY. The plate is covered with another one of the same size, quite big and oval.

Then he removes the top plate.

On the main plate are plenty of other jewels. The other half, actually the half that was taken from Hood 2's stomach and guts.

COLBY is tied but in spite of that he manages to leap up with horror. He just understood what is expected from him.

RICK

(as he gets back to his chair)

I see we don't have to make a drawing for you.

COLBY

It... it can't be!

PETE

What?

COLBY

You can't ask me to do this!

PETE

Why not? Your friend did it, and nobody had to ask him. So you can do it too.

COLBY

No...

RICK

(smirking slightly)

C'me on, man. Don't play fuckin' pussy on us! We know you're worth better than that! Especially after what you did today.

PETE

And what you did at the morgue was a real masterpiece, man. A coup de maitre. Better than that, a... tour de force.

As they talk, COLBY gasps more and more.

RICK

You ain't gonna disappoint us now, are you? Tell me you're not!

PETE

C'me on, eat.

COLBY

(screaming)

NO !!

PETE punches him hard in the head with his useful right hand, before pulling his face with pain and some fury.

RICK stands up and walks to COLBY, his gun in his hand. He puts the gun on COLBY's head.

RICK

The next time you scream... I blow your head off. I'll also do it... if you don't eat.

Now COLBY's face is just a mask of terror.

RICK cocks his gun.

RICK (cont'd)

Eat... or die.

COLBY

Okay... okay! I'll do it. I'LL DO IT !!

#### INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

PETE suddenly produces... a switch-blade knife. He makes the blade appear with a loud click. Then he stands up, walks behind COLBY and unties his hands and chest. But he leaves his legs and feet tied to the chair.

Then he goes back to his chair. He sits back down.

Shivering all over, COLBY picks up a necklace and slowly takes it to his mouth. After a while... he swallows it. He does it successfully, with pain but without choking.

RICK

Good. Go on.

COLBY takes a ring and puts it on, then off his tongue.

COLBY

I... I can't swallow this...
without water.

RICK

Sure you can.

COLBY

I need water!

RICK

You friend didn't need the first drop.

COLBY

He was my friend, not my twin brother! And I need water!

RTCK

Swallow it, or I make you eat something else.

This threat has the desired effect. COLBY puts the ring back on his tongue, then he shuts his eyes and, after a moment... he swallows, one, two, three times. The pain on his face is intense enough to make it turn red... and to make PETE smile.

COLBY coughs a few times.

RICK

You throw it all up and you're dead, you hear?

COLBY

(on the edge)

Please...

(he swallows again)
... please gimme some water...

PETE

After you finish your meal. Everything has its day.

COLBY

I got pain... that ring...

RICK

Just go on.

COLBY turns to him, horrified.

COLBY

What kind of man are you? (Then, to PETE:)

Both of you?

(Back to RICK:)

YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!

RICK

The hell we are. Fuckin' human beings, just like you. Now shut the fuck up and keep eating. We'll give you all the water you need... when your plate is clean. Understand?

His gun is still put on COLBY's head.

#### INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

COLBY swallows another necklace... then another necklace... then an earring... another ring... another earring... a bracelet of pearls... another necklace... etc., etc. and he does all this with the threat of that gun put on his head.

PETE

Good, pal. You're almost done. Keep going!

RICK

And you know what? You got witnesses. Your partner didn't have any. How's that?

COLBY is in a terrible condition. His face is now very pale. There is much liquid dropping from his eyes and nose. He's pretty much about to collapse.

But he's almost "over".

PETE

Just a little more while, pal. Think of your partner, who did exactly the same thing for you.

COLBY puts a bracelet into his mouth.

### INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

He's over. The plate is empty. RICK removes the gun.

PETE

Congrats, my man! You did it!

COLBY

(moaning)

Please...

RICK

Sure.

(To PETE)

Give it to him.

PETE gets up, walks to the fridge, opens it and takes out a water bottle. Then he fills up the big glass on the table. RICK picks it up and gives it to COLBY who drinks it like his life was depending on it... which is now true, in a way.

He drains the glass straight-up.

COLBY

(begging)

Another one...

RICK

Sure.

PETE fills the glass again, COLBY drinks everything in one go. He puts the empty glass on the table, gasping with relief. The two cops just stay there, staring at him.

### INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Suddenly COLBY starts to feel dizzy.

COLBY'S POV -- His vision begins to weaken, to grow dim.

He takes his head with both hands and shakes his head.

COLBY

Wh... what...?

He turns to the two cops.

COLBY'S POV -- Both cops look now foggy through his eyes.

COLBY (cont'd)

What did you... make me drink?

He starts to break down for good, tries to stand up but doesn't have no more strength to do so. Anyway his feet are still tied to the chair.

COLBY (cont'd)

You... fuckin'... coppies!

The two cops look at each other.

PETE

About time, huh... I was starting to tell myself that maybe you didn't put enough of that stuff.

RICK

Are you kidding? If I'm called the "Narco King", it's for a good reason.

COLBY collapses on the plate.

RICK (cont'd)

Sweet dreams, fellow...

PETE

This will keep you from throwing up everything. Just a precaution.

## INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

56.

Both cops drag COLBY out of his apartment, carrying him under his arms, PETE on the left side, using his right arm, RICK on the right side.

They get by the elevator, and RICK pushes the button.

# EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

57.

They arrive beside COLBY's car.

RICK

Don't worry. I got the ignition keys. I found them in his pockets.

They open one of the back doors and put COLBY inside the car. PETE gets on the back seat too, in order to watch the guy close.

RICK takes the wheel, starts the engine and drives away.

### EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

58.

COLBY's car gets back to where we saw it for the first time: in front of the morgue. The car RICK and Lonnie used to come is of course still there.

## INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

59.

When we left the morgue last time, the coroner, his assistant and Lonnie were lying unconscious around a table, the one with Hood 2's open dead body lying on it. The coroner knocked down, the two others asleep under some raw narcotic.

Now they are on their feet, somewhere else. They are around another table.

CLOSE UPS on the CORONER's face, then on his ASSISTANT's face, then on LONNIE's face, all looking down at something with eyes like daggers.

Like the old proverb says, "Revenge is a dish best served cold". Their looks, mixing furious anger and greed, are about to illustrate that proverb. The so-called dish is right under their eyes.

It's COLBY's body, stripped to the waist, lying on a table, the kind of table only dead people can be lying on. COLBY, of course, is alive. On this table he looks dead, but he's alive.

They all stand around him - the CORONER and his ASSISTANT, and the three cops, RICK, PETE and LONNIE. They all look down at him like we look at some piece of dead meat we're about to tear apart.

CORONER

It's him?

RICK

Sure it's him. Don't you recognize him?

CORONER

Sure I do. I just can't figure how you managed to...

RICK

Not now, Doctor. No time.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

I can't believe this.

PETE

(showing COLBY)

He couldn't either, when we caught him. And he won't believe to be in hell when he gets there. But...

(a break)

... once he does he'll have all the time to understand that you can't make fun of the police force and the medical profession without paying the bill.

They take another moment looking down at the guy.

RICK

Are you ready, Doctor?

CORONER

Yes I am.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

What about a gag on his mouth?

They look at Colby's face, then RICK looks at his watch.

RICK

(to the CORONER)

Is it closed?

CORONER

Oh yeah, it is.

RICK

Okay. It's late enough. Nobody will hear him.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Nobody but us.

They look at him. Then RICK and PETE look at each other, then, at the CORONER, who nods.

PETE

(shrugging)

Okay for the gag.

They gag COLBY.

RICK

You'll find everything inside.

CORONER

Thanks a lot.

PETE

No problem. Have fun.

RICK and PETE have a last look down at their victim, then they start to walk away... and RICK turns.

RICK

(to LONNIE)

Boy, are you coming?

LONNIE

(shaking his head)

No. I'll stay here.

His first words since his partners have showed up. His eyes are still down on the man lying on the table.

The CORONER and his ASSISTANT don't pay attention, they already put on their masks and gloves.

RICK stares at the young cop, who looks up at him.

LONNIE (cont'd)

I don't wanna miss this.

RICK looks at him for a half dozen more seconds, then he finally gives up; he walks away with PETE, saying nothing.

### INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

60.

CORONER

Bistoury.

His ASSISTANT gives him the required tool.

Without hesitating, with a safe, experienced hand, in a slow, neat, precise way, the CORONER starts making the incision along COLBY's thorax.

As he operates, COLBY starts to move, first slowly, then faster and faster; he also starts moaning with pain. And blood starts to run on his body, on both sides of the incision.

Even before the CORONER gets to the abdomen, COLBY opens his eyes - round eyes starting out of his head - and starts screaming behind his gag, now totally awake.

Nothing changes on the CORONER's face; same expression, same professional mask. He just keeps cutting, paying no attention to the sounds and the body's movements. Same thing about his ASSISTANT's and LONNIE's faces. The two young guys don't even move.

Now COLBY moves around frantically. But of course he can't get up or do anything to stop the CORONER. He can hardly move.

CLOSE UPS: on his throat, ankles, wrists, lower abdomen... all held on the table, tied tight to underneath the table with some pieces of hard texture.

As the CORONER keeps cutting, blood just keeps running all over the body. And COLBY keeps "convulsing" and screaming behind his gag with pain and starting agony, his eyes wide open with terror. And the two young boys keep standing still.

When the CORONER finishes cutting, he puts down the bistoury, inserts his gloved hands into the long opening... and, in a micro-second, he spreads it out, opening the body wide.

COLBY freezes under the shock and stops screaming, but his eyes remain wide open. His head falls back on the table. He's dead. Or looks so.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT and LONNIE start showing some expression on their faces. Like nothing had happened before.

We can see almost everything inside the body, the stomach and intestines of course, but also the heart... that still beats, slower and slower.

Colby's stomach is slightly torn from the CORONER's speedy movements to open the body. The CORONER can see what's inside. So can the two young men.

With both bare hands, LONNIE tears the stomach apart and takes a handful of... JEWELS. Gold jewels.

LONNIE

(starting to laugh
 hysterically)
We... we're rich! WE'RE RICH !!

The CORONER soon does the same, and his ASSISTANT has a look at what's in his hand. He starts watching with round eyes.

The stomach is filled with them. In fact it is even overloaded. Rick and Pete had gone too far, they had made COLBY swallow a very big quantity of them. Too big. But they made it.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT takes a handful of jewels, puts it in one of his pocket, then he has an idea. He falls down on Colby's open body and starts taking the bloody guts off with both hands.

His idea is maybe some more jewels found the time to get inside some of the intestines. So in order to make sure that nothing is lost, the intestines need to be searched and emptied too.

LONNIE gets the concept; with a grin on his face he lays his handful of jewels on the floor and comes over to help him. They remove everything that can hide jewels and stuff.

It's like in a George Romero's zombie movie. Except that the creatures ripping off the body are not hungry inhuman creatures but real human beings. And they don't feed with the guts, their intention is just to check them, make sure there's nothing valuable inside.

Everything happens very normally, like the three men are doing something very trivial. Actually they don't seem to be there. The CORONER is still under the shock of his knockout, and his ASSISTANT and LONNIE are still under the narcotic's influence, they seem to be drifting between dream and reality, more or less conscious of what they're doing.

While the CORONER'S ASSISTANT and LONNIE clean the guts, the CORONER does the same with the stomach.

Soon there's nothing under the stomach. And almost nothing inside it. LONNIE and the CORONER'S ASSISTANT move away from the table, their hands filled with blood-dripping intestines, lay them on the floor and start 'searching' them. "Just Checking".

#### INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

ZOOM IN: Colby's open and partly cleaned upper body, to his heart, which doesn't beat any longer. The CAMERA approaches, and stops.

Then... there's one beat.

COLBY's still alive. Not for long, of course.

He doesn't move an inch, his eyes are still wide open with horror.

His "punishment" is not over yet.

His three executioners, who are not aware of this, who don't care anyway, are now away from him, counting what they have.

Not far from COLBY, on another table... his accomplice (HOOD 2) is lying, dead.

As the three others keep counting their fortune, a drawer starts to get opening just above LONNIE's head. They make so much noise that they don't see and hear anything in the first place.

As COLBY passes away the drawer opens completely, all by itself.

The body revealed starts to turn to one side. LONNIE looks up and sees it turning to him, from the bottom. The dead man suddenly opens 'its' eyes, looking down straight at LONNIE.

LONNIE starts screaming with terror as the body falls down on him.

### INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

LONNIE abruptly wakes up from his nightmare, gasping.

He's in an ambulance rolling fast, its siren blowing like crazy.

The two AMBULANCE MEN inside the vehicle run to him. They wear white overalls, exactly like the coroner and his assistant inside the morgue. LONNIE sees that and freezes.

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Hey, hey... it's all right. You're safe now.

LONNIE

Safe?

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Yes.

LONNIE

Where am I?

AMBULANCE MAN 2

You're on your way to the closest hospital.

LONNIE

Hospital?

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Yeah.

LONNIE

But I'm all right.

AMBULANCE MAN 1

No you're not.

LONNIE

I'm not?

He starts to get off the stretcher, then feels a bit dizzy and needs to lean on the bed not to lose his balance. The two guys help him.

AMBULANCE MAN 2

You see?

LONNIE

I was asleep, that's all. I need to go to the police headquarters. Now.

The two ambulance guys exchange amazed looks.

AMBULANCE MAN 2

(astounded)

You were asleep?

LONNIE

Yeah. A fuckin' guy made me drink some booze mixed with narcotic.

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Are you telling us that this thing happened to you inside that morgue?

LONNIE

Yes, I am. Now can you stop the vehicle, please?

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Certainly not.

Why not?

AMBULANCE MAN 2

Because this is an ambulance, not a taxi cab. How will we look like if we stop now and let you out, when you're supposed to be taken to intensive care?

LONNIE almost laughs.

LONNIE

You'll look much more ridiculous if I show up in perfect shape at the hospital. Especially in intensive care.

AMBULANCE MAN 2

We just can't. Besides there's another ambulance behind us.

LONNIE

Now look...

(He pulls out his badge.)
I want out of this ambulance, is that clear?

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Put that away. Or show it to the driver. We know you want out, but we just can't let you.

AMBULANCE MAN 2

We need you to lie down again on the stretcher and wait until we get to the hospital. Can you do that? From there you'll be able to do anything you want.

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Is that a deal?

LONNIE

(after a moment)

No, but...

(as he puts his badge away)
... what the hell.

He reluctantly lies down on the stretcher.

#### EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The two ambulances stop in front of the hospital entrance.

The two guys open the back doors of the ambulance in front, then they grab the litter with LONNIE lying on it and faking unconsciousness, taking it out of the vehicle and rolling it to the entrance, then inside the hospital.

Two other litters are in front, with the CORONER and his ASSISTANT, still very unconscious, lying on them.

## INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

As soon as it's inside, two LITTER BEARERS take over LONNIE's litter.

LITTER BEARER 1 What happened to this one?

AMBULANCE MAN 1

Well, he'll tell you. Just shake him a little bit.

Then the two ambulance guys walk out right away, adding nothing more.

As he's taken somewhere, LONNIE slightly opens an eye, looking around as well as he can.

Until he suddenly half stands up on his litter, smiling.

LONNIE

Hi there.

The two LITTER BEARERS release the litter, their eyes wide open.

LITTER BEARER 1

What the...

The litter keeps rolling by itself with LONNIE sitting on it. He jumps off and starts walking around, testing himself.

No problem. He walks normal, he looks fine. No dizziness at all.

Then he ends up standing in front of the two guys. He pulls out his badge one more time.

L.A.P.D.. Sorry, I gotta get outta here.

LITTER BEARER 2

Hey, wait a min...

LONNIE

I'm very well. Look, somebody got mixed up... just forget about this, okay?

The two guys look around them.

LITTER BEARER 1

Well... sure, but...

LONNIE

Cool.

LITTER BEARER 2

What the hell happened?

LONNIE

Something really unusual. You don't need to know. Now, I really have to leave. Bye, guys.

He walks away from them and is about to leave the hospital, when he stops, seeming to have an inspiration.

He walks back inside, going to the main desk, using his badge to go straight up front. There's an old, competent WOMAN behind the desk.

LONNIE

Excuse me for this... L.A.P.D.. I need to check about a police officer who was brought here tonight.

WOMAN

What's his name?

LONNIE

Peter Lawford.

WOMAN

And what's the problem he's got?

He was shot tonight, in the shoulder.

WOMAN

Sorry... what's his name again?

LONNIE

Peter Lawford. L-A-W-...

WOMAN

Okay, I got it.

A pause, as she checks her computer.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Oh... he seems to be not here any more, sir.

LONNIE

What do you mean?

WOMAN

Well, he left, sir.

LONNIE

(flabbergasted)

He LEFT? When?

WOMAN

About an hour ago. He didn't tell anybody, he didn't sign anything... he's gone.

LONNIE

(after a short pause)

Okay. Thanks for your help.

WOMAN

You're welcome.

She looks almost as surprised as he may be.

LONNIE

Have a good night.

He turns round and walks out of the hospital.

## EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Once outside he reaches the street and looks around for a taxi. As he sees one heading to the right direction he waves to it.

The taxi stops in front of him, he gets in and the car rolls way.

#### INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

He walks in EDSON's office.

LONNIE

Lieutenant...

# INT. EDSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

EDSON looks up.

EDSON

Mister Nelson, what can I do for you? By the way you all right?

LONNIE

I'm okay. I'd like to make an oral report to you, right now.

EDSON

About what have happened tonight I guess.

LONNIE

Yes, sir.

EDSON

Well, c'me on in and have a seat, young man. Relax, and just go for it. I'm all yours.

LONNIE closes the door and takes his seat.

LONNIE

D'you know where Rick Azarias is?

EDSON

Oh, he's fired. We shouldn't see him here ever again.

Fired?

EDSON

Yes. I sent him to the morgue tonight, he was supposed to go there by himself to supervise the autopsy on that guy. But instead he took you with him, then he dropped you there and drove away.

LONNIE

(taken aback)

He drove away?

EDSON

That's right. He disobeyed my orders and put you at huge risk. He's a lying, assholish son-of-abitch and his ass is fired grass. I haven't told him yet, I believe he still doesn't know and I don't give a damn.

LONNIE

What about the search at the lane crime scene?

EDSON

It's still on, I guess.

LONNIE

Well, you can stop everything right away. There's nothing there.

**EDSON** 

What d'you mean by that?

LONNIE

I know where the jewels are. Or were.

EDSON

Yeah? And where?

LONNIE

Inside the dead guy's stomach.

EDSON

(his eyes wide open)

Are you kidding me?

No, I'm not. The guy had swallowed his half of the loot before he got shot. Then his accomplice showed up for the autopsy, dressed like some priest, and when the body got open he took this same half loot away.

**EDSON** 

Jesus... Are you sure about that?

LONNIE

You bet I'm sure, I was there.

EDSON

What about you guys lying down on the floor, passed out?

LONNIE

He took care of us. He diverted us with whisky mixed with some narcotic. It was very innocent. I should have known better...

EDSON

Yeah, you should have.

LONNIE

Look, I need to talk to Azarias about it.

EDSON

What for? I just told you he's not part of the force any more.

LONNIE

When we got there he told me that his radio would stay connected to mine during the autopsy. So he certainly heard what happened. He must have.

**EDSON** 

(shaking his head)

He didn't.

LONNIE

Why not?

**EDSON** 

He had a date with some girl tonight. That's the reason he left you behind, he wanted to go to her. He used you. So believe me, he certainly turned off his radio as soon as he drove away from the morgue.

LONNIE

Maybe he did, maybe he didn't.

**EDSON** 

Trust me, he did.

LONNIE

What about Peter Lawford?

EDSON

Well, he just resigned.

LONNIE

(amazed)

He WHAT??

EDSON

He quit. He called me about twenty minutes ago.

LONNIE

Twenty minutes?

EDSON

Yeah, what's the problem? What's wrong with that? He got shot tonight, he almost got killed. In my career I've seen many other guys quitting for much less than that.

LONNIE

Where did he call you from?

EDSON

What do you think? The hospital. He's still there.

LONNIE

(shaking his head)

No, he's not.

EDSON

(annoyed)

What are you talking about now?

LONNIE

I was taken there in an ambulance, remember? I asked for him at the main desk and I was told he walked away an hour before, without telling anybody!

With a sigh, EDSON picks up the phone and dials the number of the hospital.

EDSON

(after a break)

Hello, this is Lieutenant Edson, I'd like to check one of your patients, he's one of my men, officer Peter Lawford. I need to see if he's still in your hospital.

#### INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

WOMAN

Yes, I think somebody else asked me that too, right in front of me, a short time ago. Gimme a minute.

A pause.

INT. EDSON'S OFFICE

EDSON

Oh... He's gone. Over an hour ago. How can you explain that?

INT. HOSPITAL

WOMAN

Lieutenant, this is a hospital here, not a prison. We can't stop people from leaving when they need or want to.

INT. EDSON'S OFFICE

EDSON

Yeah, I believe you can't. Well, (MORE)

EDSON (con'd)

thanks anyway. Have a good night. (He hangs up the phone.) What the hell is going on here?

LONNIE

If you can allow me, sir...

**EDSON** 

Yeah, what?

LONNIE

Maybe Azarias did hear what happened inside the morgue, so he drove back, managed to find the other guy's trace in some way, then he called Lawford at the hospital for help.

EDSON

(outraged)

Are you telling me that they'd have captured him and didn't bring him here?

LONNIE

Well, it's a possibility.

EDSON

This is huge! What's making you say such kind of thing?

LONNIE

A hunch.

**EDSON** 

A lousy hunch!

LONNIE

Look, sir, Azarias did drop me at the morgue, didn't he? He left me behind, and since we haven't heard from him.

**EDSON** 

Sure, because he's having his date.

LONNIE

But he's not supposed to, right?

**EDSON** 

That's why I fired his ass!

Did you call him to tell him that?

EDSON

Don't worry, he'll know about it soon enough.

LONNIE

He doesn't know about it yet, that's the point.

EDSON

He's no priority. Somebody else may have told him.

LONNIE

You can't be sure. Did Azarias come in here to give you his badge and his gun?

EDSON

He'll do that in the morning. Or even tonight.

LONNIE

(with doubt)

If he ever does.

EDSON

What the hell is this? What's the rush anyway?

LONNIE

You should call him now. At least to see if he'll take the call or not.

EDSON

(ironic)

What are you trying to say? That he might have left town already?

LONNIE

Another possibility. We can't say.

EDSON

(surprised)

What? Are you serious?

LONNIE

LONNIE (cont'd)

and reason, when he's seriously injured. And he called you about his so-called resignation way after that. There's something wrong.

EDSON

I can't believe this... are you hearing yourself?

LONNIE

Yes sir, I am.

**EDSON** 

And I think the drug that guy made you swallow at the morgue is still working on you.

LONNIE

Do you think I'm hallucinating all this? You don't believe me?

EDSON

Do you really expect me to believe in...

LONNIE

In the facts. Just the facts!

EDSON glares at him. After a pause:

EDSON

Now look... get out of my office, will you?

LONNIE

Sir, wait a min...

EDSON

Just go home and get some sleep.

LONNIE

But...

EDSON

Do as I say. You're young, and you just had a very hard time. Tomorrow you'll show up here with new fresh ideas. Good night, boy. Take it easy.

LONNIE looks at him, dismayed. He knows there's nothing else he can say. So he leaves the office slowly, closing the door softly.

EDSON (cont'd)

(with a new sigh, moving back
on his chair)

Rookies...

But he looks to be thinking.

## INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

LONNIE walks through the main room, on his way out. Then he spots somebody and goes towards his desk.

LONNIE

Hey, Hank.

HANK

(looking up)

Hey kid, what's up?

(frowning)

You should be home for long. There are plenty of nuts out there, lurking at night around people like you.

LONNIE

Yeah, then I show 'em my gun and they split. Look, I need some piece of info from you. It's important.

HANK

What?

LONNIE

It's about Azarias' girlfriend. I know you're quite close to him, so maybe...

HANK

(grinning)

What? You wanna screw her too, is that it?

LONNIE

If you say so. I need her name or phone number.

HANK

I was just kidding, kiddo. You're too young for this shit.

LONNIE

Well?

HANK

Rick doesn't have a girlfriend. But he's been flirting quite much on the Net. I don't know why, but he gave me the full name of the last chick he talked dirty to. He must be jumping her by now.

LONNIE

So he kind of invited you? Why didn't you go with him?

HANK looks at him, quite amused.

HANK

You shouldn't ask that kind of question. It's not of your age.

LONNIE

Can you give me her name, please?

HANK

Sure. Joanna Brent.

LONNIE

Thanks.

HANK

Your mum's gonna be mad at you.

LONNIE

Especially after I show her the film.

HANK

(laughing)

Get outta here, you young pervert! Ain't you ashamed? I hope some wacko will waste your ass as soon as you leave this place.

LONNIE

One more thing.

HANK

What?

LONNIE

Did you see Azarias around here tonight?

HANK

I didn't see him since he took you out with him.

LONNIE

I see. He's probably with that girl.

HANK

Fuckin' guy, huh?

LONNIE

Bye, Hank. Thanks.

He walks away.

#### INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

He walks through a corridor and stops by a public phone. There's a phone book close by, he takes it and starts looking for Joanna Brent's number.

He finds it, picks up the phone and dials the number.

After a pause:

VOICE

Hello?

LONNIE

Hello? Joanna Brent?

VOICE

Who are you?

LONNIE

Are you Joanna Brent?

# INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

There's a gorgeous young woman at the other end of the line.

WOMAN

Yes I am. What do you want?

### INT. POLICE STATION

LONNIE

Er... I'd like to talk to Rick Azarias. I suppose you're with him?

JOANNA (v.o.)

Who are you to know so much?

LONNIE

My name is Lonnie Nelson, I'm a police officer. One of his colleagues. He told about some date with you tonight...

JOANNA (v.o.)

Oh, he did?

LONNIE

Yeah. Can I speak to him, if possible?

JOANNA (v.o.)

Well, I'm trying to speak to him myself.

LONNIE

What do you mean?

#### INT. APARTMENT

JOANNA

Well, we have a date tonight all right. We've never seen each other in the flesh, we've been talking only through webcams. We're supposed to meet tonight, at my place. He still didn't show up, I've been waiting for some time now and I'm thinking about sneaking out. Can you take his place?

As an answer she hears the tone. LONNIE had hung up.

She stares at the receiver, frowning. Then she hangs up slowly in her turn and THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE IN:

#### EXT. STREETS OF L.A. - DAY

The next morning. Very early. Los Angeles seems quiet from the top. Like any other big city.

We go lower and lower and we hear police and ambulance sirens, along with screams from people having a very hard time.

Then we land on the streets and we see people pushing and pulling stretchers out of houses or buildings, taking the stretchers into ambulance or coroner vans. When the bodies on the stretchers are totally covered, it means that they're dead.

All over the city things like this happen. People who had a heart attack, or got murdered, or committed suicide, or got torched in fires, or had a deadly vehicle accident, or got deadly hit by vehicles, or passed away after a long illness, or simply died from natural causes... They all finish the same way, on stretchers, their bodies totally covered, taken into vans.

DISSOLVE TO:

### INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The CAMERA is high up in the bedroom, over the bed, with LONNIE and SANDRA sleeping separately. The CAMERA moves slowly to them, then to LONNIE. His eyes are closed, but when the CAMERA catches his face in a CLOSE-UP, there is a noise and his eyes open up.

After a few seconds he closes his eyes again, then there's another noise and he opens them again.

He half stands on the bed, his feet on the floor, taking his head in his hands. Then he stands up and moves to the door. As he does it SANDRA moves in her sleep.

### INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

LONNIE walks straight to the entrance door. He unlocks and opens it, then he has a look outside.

Nothing. Nothing and nobody. But there are noises. Noises that include voices.

## INT. BUILDING - MORNING

He walks out and has a look down, through the floors, and sees people carrying something. People in white overalls.

A voice, behind him:

VOICE

What are you doing?

He turns abruptly. It's SANDRA. He has a deep breath.

She joins him and hugs him from behind.

SANDRA

Sorry.

She starts kissing his back and neck. He doesn't pay much attention, just keeps looking down, then he turns.

LONNIE

Come on.

He takes her hand and they go back inside their apartment.

## INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

He closes the door and locks it.

Then he goes to a window and has a look outside. Then to another. He opens the window and has a better look.

There's an ambulance in front of their building entrance door. Just below him. SANDRA sees it too. They exchange a short look.

Then he closes the window.

LONNIE (cont'd)

I have to go somewhere.

He walks to the bedroom.

SANDRA

Where?

LONNIE

Somewhere.

BEDROOM

SANDRA

Why?

He puts on his shirt. Then his shoes.

LONNIE

Something to check out.

SANDRA

Can't this wait?

LONNIE

No, I don't think so.

SANDRA

Why not?

LONNIE

Look, don't ask so many questions. I won't be long, okay? You can call me, any time.

SANDRA

I don't wanna talk to you on a stupid cell phone. I want you right here. With me.

LONNIE

Look, I got a job to do.

SANDRA

Nobody's called you yet.

He comes to her.

LONNIE

Nobody has to.

He kisses her softly. She tries to make him do it harder. He pulls back just before.

LONNIE (cont'd)

I'll be back.

He walks away from her.

SANDRA

(frowning)

What does that suppose to mean?

Go back to bed.

He takes his coat and leaves.

## EXT. MORGUE - DAY

The CAMERA goes down from the "Morgue" sign to the building entrance... and somebody walking to the door, opening it and getting inside.

#### INT. MORGUE - DAY

It's LONNIE. He walks along a rather large and long hall, passing by some doors; then he goes to 'the' door. The main office.

He knocks.

VOICE

Yeah?

LONNIE

Police, sir. Open the door.

VOICE

(sounding different)

It's open!

LONNIE opens the door...

### INT. MORGUE - DAY

... and walks inside the office. The CORONER and his ASSISTANT are on both sides of a desk, with the CORONER behind it.

If they had taken the half loot - the part they took out of COLBY's stomach - with them they wouldn't be back in here. So his dream was partly wrong. Of course, it's just a dream.

They both smile at him.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Hey, good morning!

CORONER

Hello, young man.

Good morning, sir.

CORONER

Where's your badge?

LONNIE

In my jacket.

CORONER

And you're not producing it?

LONNIE

Should I?

CORONER

If your intention is to take us to your headquarters for a questioning, yes, I think you should.

LONNIE

That's not my intention. Are you okay, sir? I guess he hit you a little bit too hard.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
I had to, he had a gun on me. What
am I saying, he had a gun on both
of us.

CORONER

And I had the greatest sleep in years, thank you.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
Doctor, one more time you've been knocked down. You didn't sleep.

CORONER

When I woke up they begged me to stay a little more while. You know, at the hospital.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

You should have stayed there. At least for today.

(to LONNIE)

I just keep telling him this.

(to the CORONER)

I kind of agree with him. You could have stayed there for a little while, you know, taken the opportunity to get some rest.

CORONER

I don't need to be in hospital for that. What about that fake priest the gangster? Did you guys get him?

LONNIE

(hesitating)

Er... yes... I mean no... no.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Yes or no?

LONNIE

No. He's still on the loose.

CORONER

Are you sure, young man? I guess he took care of you too.

LONNIE

(nodding)

Yes, he did...

CORONER

Are you okay?

LONNIE

I'm fine.

CORONER

(about his assistant)

He told me about a narcotic that was in the booze...

LONNIE

That's right.

CORONER

Are there any developments? About the case?

LONNIE

(shaking his head)

Not yet.

CORONER

How could there be any? We don't even know his name!

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

He had a moustache but that could have been a fake. Maybe his eyes were fake too.

CORONER

The son-of-a-bitch really screwed all of us.

LONNIE

We're doing our possible... look, I'm very glad you're both okay.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

You showed up here only to see us and say this?

LONNIE

No. I need your permission to go back downstairs, into the mortuary hall.

CORONER

(surprised)

Why?

LONNIE

Well, as you know there's an investigation going on. I need a place to start, this is it.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

What do you need to know?

LONNIE

I just need to be back down there. For ten of fifteen minutes, no more. I guess all the cops and reporters in the city have visited the place after it occurred, when you both were in hospital. I still haven't.

CORONER

All right.

He opens a drawer and picks up what sounds to be a small brunch of keys. Then he stands up, his ASSISTANT with him.

CORONER (cont'd)

No, stay in here. I'll be right back.

He walks out of his office, LONNIE behind him.

## INT. MORGUE - DAY

CORONER

This way.

LONNIE follows him along the corridor, up to the right door. The big one, opening on marble stairs lighted by wall lamps. The CORONER unlocks the door and opens it. The wall lamps are off but the CORONER holds out a hand and turns them on, lighting the stairs.

CORONER (cont'd)

I'll have to lock the door back behind you, do you understand that?

LONNIE

Yes.

CORONER

When you need out, just bang hard on the door. We'll hear you.

LONNIE

Okay.

CORONER

And please don't touch the bodies. That's the only thing I can ask you: not to touch the bodies.

LONNIE

I won't. Promise.

CORONER

Also don't take too much time. We're already expecting more bodies, they're on their way.

LONNIE

All right.

CORONER

Thank you. Have a nice trip.

That I will.

He nods and the CORONER closes the door and locks it behind  $\ensuremath{\text{him.}}$ 

## INT. MORGUE - TIMELESS

LONNIE goes down the stairs and enters the hall. There are still tables filling up the floor. He walks between them, trying to figure out the exact spot where the autopsy - the real one - did occur.

He finds the spot and crouches, starting looking around, searching for anything that could have mystified the police. But of course there is nothing. Nothing at all. The spot and everything around it - in fact, the whole place - has been cleaned up. And of course, no death mark on the floor, since the only dead one involved in the case was on a table. On the floor the police had found three people who were unconscious but alive and in good health.

After a short while he stands back up, rather disappointed, scratching his head. Then he looks around, at the walls filled with drawers and... at all those tables around him.

He walks to the head of the closest one, holds out a hand and slowly pulls the white sheet back, uncovering the head of a dead woman he doesn't know. Then he covers the head back. All of this without touching the dead skin.

He goes to the head of the next closest table and does the same thing, uncovering the head of another dead body, almost expecting to find HOOD 2 lying on it. Of course he finds somebody else. The head is turned to the other side. Suddenly it moves and turns to him... and opens its eyes.

## It's COLBY !!

With horror LONNIE covers the head back quickly and moves back, gasping like crazy, one hand close to his heart, the other close to his mouth. After a minute he kind of pulls himself together and stops gasping, trying to calm down.

This is not possible. Probably just a revival of that dream he had last night. Maybe the lieutenant is right, the drug is still working on him. This mixed with LONNIE's imagination and we have a cocktail that can be explosive.

He moves back to the head of the table and uncovers the body's

head again. The head is not Colby's. It's totally different. The one of another dead guy who doesn't look like Colby at all.

He covers the head back again and takes a deep sigh of relief. As he does it the CAMERA turns in order to face him... showing a human shape behind him.

LONNIE turns round to go somewhere else and almost runs into him. He stops just in time, at once paralyzed with high surprise.

It's COLBY again !! Now he's standing.

He grabs LONNIE at the throat with his left hand, then he pushes him backwards and bangs him hard on the wall. LONNIE screams briefly with pain as his body hurts the drawer's handles. Then COLBY lifts LONNIE up, along the wall and drawers. As he unsuccessfully tries to scream LONNIE fights to turn loose but he's not powerful enough, COLBY has no difficulty to hold him up.

With his right hand COLBY tears apart LONNIE's upper clothes. Then, still saying nothing, he takes something out of the back pocket of his pants.

It's a bistoury.

LONNIE sees it and stops moving around, terrorized. As he tries to scream COLBY tightens his grab on his throat... and raises the bistoury, shining, glowing under the pale light.

LONNIE

(weakly)

No... no...

It's not possible. This character had humiliated him in real life and LONNIE had imagined the worst for him but it was only in a dream, in some kind of an angry phantasm. Now that character, who's possibly dead, has returned to real life - probably as some ghost - and is about to take his life, to get some payback!

If he really managed to get lost with all the loot, then what the hell is he doing down here?

COLBY touches LONNIE's chest with the bistoury, then he pushes, starting to spill some blood and making LONNIE moan in stinging pain. Then, with a quick move, he opens LONNIE's chest deep, from top to bottom.

Despite the still tightened grab LONNIE manages to yell. In horrible pain and starting agony.

#### INT. MORGUE - DAY

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

What was that?

CORONER

Yeah, I heard it too. I asked him to bang on the door, not to scream like that.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT
It was horrible. We should go have a look.

CORONER

If you say so...

This time they both get out of the office.

#### INT. MORGUE - TIMELESS

With one foot COLBY tries to open the lowest drawer he can find. He succeeds just as LONNIE's blood starts dripping inside the drawer, which is empty. Then he takes LONNIE down, using LONNIE's feet to open the drawer wider and wider as he progressively lays the young cop inside, from his feet to his head.

He closes the drawer, with a dying LONNIE inside, with a BANG°! just as the CORONER unlocks and opens the big door. Him and his ASSISTANT have just the time to hear the noise.

CORONER

Hello?

They both start to get down the stairs.

CORONER (cont'd)

Young man, is that you? Hello?

No response.

They enter the room and see nothing and nobody. They're totally disconcerted.

CORONER (cont'd)

Hello? Where are you?

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

(normally)

Where is he?

No answer from his boss who just keeps going, looking around.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT (cont'd)

Maybe he just went out.

CORONER

Impossible, the door was locked, and I have the key.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Well, maybe he had a passkey.

CORONER

Don't be ridiculous.

He keeps going through the hall, his ASSISTANT following close, keeping looking around for something special... and sees nothing and nobody!

CORONER (cont'd)

(more insistently)

Hello!

No response from LONNIE.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Hello?

Nothing.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT (cont'd)

Maybe we should call the cops.

CORONER

Maybe, yeah. It's your favorite word this morning.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

I'm serious now.

CORONER

He's a cop himself.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

He's a kid first.

CORONER

I don't know.

(shaking his head)
I don't know. Vanishing in this
place? All those young people
really overwhelm me. I can't
follow. I just can't follow.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

So what do we do?

As they talk they finally reach the end of the hall. The CAMERA faces them and shows COLBY's shape standing behind them, in a distance, not moving an inch.

The CORONER half turns, not enough to see him, and watches one of the two lines of beds and the bodies covered with white sheets, lying on them.

CORONER

Maybe he's playing with us, you know. Some stupid game for kids.

The CORONER'S ASSISTANT turns completely and... he doesn't see COLBY. He's gone. And nothing happens.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

(grinning)

You mean he may be lying on one of those tables?

The CORONER shrugs, saying nothing. He walks the way back, looking around again, briefly checking the bottoms of the tables.

Nothing.

He doesn't check the bodies on the tables.

CORONER

Let's go. When he's tired he will bang on the door.

They both leave the hall through the stairs. As they do some blood starts to run down from LONNIE's closed drawer.

Soon we hear the sound of the big door closing.

There's nothing happening in the mortuary hall after that. No movement, no sound, nobody suddenly appearing, nothing.

And there's still nothing at all occurring when...

... THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.